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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [EWWT](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING, JULY 8, 2009

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[1](#)B. SG(2009)0572

Classified By: A/PolAd A. "Hoot" Baez. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary of the July 8 meeting of the North Atlantic Council:

-- AFGHANISTAN: Allies were briefed on ISAF's revised tactical directive which emphasized the importance of population security. The Deputy Secretary General and Allies expressed frustration at not being notified by military authorities in advance of the start of Operation Khanjari in Helmand province. The Director of the International Military Staff reported that a team had traveled to Kabul to discuss implementation plans for the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. A New Zealand army officer was awarded the NATO Meritorious Service Medal, the first for a non-NATO troop contributor.

-- BALKANS: The Deputy Secretary General said that outgoing Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer would pay his farewell visit to Kosovo and the NATO KFOR operation on July 27. Croatia reported on contributions it was making to KFOR.

-- AFRICAN UNION: Noting that a document (ref B) on strengthening the NATO-African Union relationship had been agreed under a Council silence procedure, the Deputy Secretary said the NATO International Staff would work with the African Union to take the issue forward.

-- COUNTER-PIRACY: The Deputy Secretary General reported that the International Staff was meeting with the Tanzanian

Ambassador to Belgium in order to explore the possibility of a NATO-Tanzanian agreement for the disposition of captured pirates.

-- IRAQ: The Deputy Secretary General said that the NATO-Iraq agreement which would provide a long-term legal framework for the continuation of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq was being distributed to Allies for final approval. The Turkish PermRep said that Ankara was not entirely happy with the text, but would not seek to block its approval. Once the agreement is approved, the Iraqi Minister of Defense will be invited to NATO Headquarters to sign it.

-- RUSSIAN INTEL THREAT IN THE ARCTIC: The NATO Special Committee briefed on a report they produced on the Russian intelligence threat to NATO interests, including energy security, in the Arctic. Several Allies, particularly the Germans and Norwegians, downplayed the Russian threat and accused the Special Committee of straying outside its mandate by making "political assessments." Others, particularly, Poland and Latvia argued that the Special Committee could not be expected to base its reports on "political correctness."

-- NRC WORKING GROUP ON DEFENSE REFORM: Germany intervened to argue that the Chairman of the NRC Working Group on Defense Reform and Cooperation should be able to call a Working Group meeting at his discretion. The U.S. opposed this, arguing that the future of this working group should be discussed as a part of the ongoing effort to finalize an NRC "way forward" paper in the NRC Preparatory Committee. After interventions

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on both sides, the Deputy Secretary General said that he intended to send the matter to the Preparatory Committee.

-- FRENCH AND GERMAN SUMMIT COORDINATORS RECEIVE AWARDS: The Secretary General presented the NATO Meritorious Service Medal to the French and German heads of the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Task Force.

-- FAREWELL TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL: Outgoing Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer bid an emotional farewell to the NAC, while reminding PermReps of their duty to take political decisions instead of hiding behind subordinate committees.

END SUMMARY

Afghanistan

12. (C/REL NATO) ISAF Takes Steps to Reduce Civilian Casualties: At the July 8 meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO Military Authorities briefed PermReps on the revised tactical directive issued on July 6 by the Commander of ISAF, General Stanley McChrystal. The revised directive emphasized the importance of population protection. For example, it clarified the use of Close Air Support in an attempt to reduce incidents of civilian casualties. The UK, in particular, welcomed the revision, noting that it was probably useful from a public diplomacy standpoint that some elements of it had been made public. The UK argued, however, that NATO needed to go further by focusing on how to reduce all civilian casualties and not just those caused by ISAF.

13. (C/REL NATO) Frustration Over Lack of Advance Notice about Operation Khanjari: Deputy Secretary General Bisogniero noted that the NAC had not been informed in advance of the start of Operation Khanjari, a major operation in Helmand province. He drew PermReps' attention to a letter received after the start of the operation in which the SHAPE Chief of Staff expressed regret that the normal practice of notifying the Secretary General was not followed (ref A). Allies expressed frustration over this incident, with Norway commenting that he had learned about the operation from the news. Canada stressed the importance of keeping the NAC informed about major operations.

¶4. (C/REL NATO) Concern Over ISAF casualties: UK PermRep Eldon pointed out the significant number of casualties suffered by Allies during the previous week. While making clear that he was not complaining, he said that Allies needed to "reflect" on the increased casualty rates. The SHAPE Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Major General Wright, reported that 19 ISAF troops had been killed in the previous week, most from improvised explosive devices.

¶5. (C/REL NATO) NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan: The Director of the NATO International Military Staff reported that a team had traveled to Kabul to discuss implementation plans for the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan with commanders in theater.

¶6. (U) NZ Officer Awarded Medal: Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer awarded Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Ramsden of the New Zealand Army the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for Ramsden's

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superior leadership during a six-month deployment in Afghanistan. LTC Ramsden is the first officer from a non-NATO troop contributing nation to receive the award.

Balkans

¶7. (C/REL NATO) The Deputy Secretary General said that outgoing Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer would pay his farewell visit to Kosovo and the NATO KFOR operation on July 27.

¶8. (C/REL NATO) Croatia reported on contributions it was making to KFOR, including the recent deployment of two helicopters. In his intervention, the Croatian Ambassador specifically thanked the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb for its assistance in this matter.

African Union

¶9. (C/REL NATO) Noting that a document (ref B) on strengthening the NATO-African Union relationship had been agreed under a Council silence procedure, the Deputy Secretary General said that the NATO International Staff would work with the African Union to take the issue forward. (Note: In a related item, the African Union has requested the provision of continued NATO strategic airlift support for the African Union Mission in Somalia until January 31, 2010.)

Counter-Piracy

¶10. (C/REL) The Deputy Secretary General reported that the International Staff was meeting with the Tanzanian Ambassador to Belgium in order to explore the possibility of a NATO-Tanzanian agreement for the disposition of captured pirates. The Deputy Secretary General pledged that the results of this meeting would be briefed to the North Atlantic Council at a later date.

Iraq

¶11. (C/REL NATO) The Deputy Secretary General said that the NATO-Iraq agreement which would provide a long-term legal framework for the continuation of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq was being distributed to Allies for final approval. The Deputy Secretary said that once final approval was reached, the Iraqi Defense Minister would be invited to NATO Headquarters to sign it.

¶12. (C/REL NATO) The Turkish Ambassador said that his authorities were not entirely happy with the text, noting

that they would have preferred stronger protections in the jurisdiction part of the document. At the same time, he said that Ankara would not block the agreement, recognizing that "negotiations had reached a certain point." He did ask, however, that the NATO International Staff note some of their concerns with Iraqi authorities, particularly on the issue of capital punishment.

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¶13. (C/REL NATO) The Polish Ambassador said that until the new agreement had gone through all appropriate processes in Iraq, including ratification, Warsaw was of the position that the existing exchange of letters remained valid under international law. The Deputy Secretary General said that Poland's interpretation was correct.

The Russian Intelligence Threat in the Arctic

¶14. (S/NF) Representatives of the NATO Special Committee--which is an advisory body on espionage and terrorist threats--briefed Allies on a report related to the Russian intelligence threat to NATO interests, particularly energy security interests, in the Arctic. (Note: The report is available for those with appropriate NATO clearances through the NATO registry/sub-registry system.) The briefing sparked a spirited discussion with several PermReps, led by the Norwegians and the Germans, arguing that the Special Committee should not have made certain "political" assessments in its report. This same group also tended to downplay the Russian threat in the Arctic while arguing that NATO's role in energy security issues should be extremely limited. The Polish and Latvian PermReps disagreed, arguing that the Special Committee's work should not be forced to conform to a "politically correct" standard. The Polish PermRep added that intelligence assessments, by their nature, should be provocative. (Note: One of the interesting dynamics in this briefing was that the main Special Committee briefer was Norwegian. It is worth asking, therefore, whether the Norwegian PermRep's intervention revealed a split within elements of the Norwegian foreign and security apparatus on the nature of the Russian threat.)

NATO-Russia

¶15. (C/REL NATO) German PermRep Brandenburg intervened to argue that the Chairman of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Working Group on Defense Reform and Cooperation should be allowed to call a meeting of the Working Group at his discretion. Brandenburg was backed by Norway, France, Turkey, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Luxembourg. While making clear that the U.S. was also in favor of moving forward with NRC cooperation, U.S. DCM Heffern argued strongly that this was not the way to go about it. He pointed out that the NRC had previously agreed that work could continue in a number of working groups and sub-committees, but that there had been no such agreement on the Defense Reform Working Group. Arguing that the NRC had not lived up to its potential even before the events in Georgia last August, Heffern said that only by taking deliberate actions to "reset" the NRC could Allies--and Russia--hope for it to work. This "reset" needed to include changes to the NRC sub-committee and working group structure. He said that coming out of the NRC Ministerial in Corfu, Allies and Russia had agreed to continue working on the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) paper on how to reform and take forward the whole NRC. He said that the PrepCom would have to consider the future of the Working Group on Defense Reform as a part of this process. Several Allies supported Heffern, including Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Danish PermRep said that he was

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not aware Council would discuss the issue and was unable to provide an instructed position. The Deputy Secretary General said that he had discussed the issue with the Secretary General and that they had agreed to send the issue to the PrepCom for further clarification.

Medal Presentations for French and German Summit Coordinators -----

¶16. (SBU) Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer presented the NATO Meritorious Service Medal to J.M. Rives, the French Secretary General of the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Task Force, for his work in preparing NATO's Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April. Rives also accepted a second medal on behalf of his German counterpart, K.A. Wokalek, who was unable to attend the ceremony. The Secretary General praised both for producing a successful summit despite the logistical problems inherent in an event with venues in two countries.

The Secretary General Says Farewell -----

¶17. (C/REL NATO) In an emotional final appearance before the NAC, outgoing Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer referred to PermReps as his "flock" and stressed that in his tenure he had always tried to give every Ally a voice. Arguing that the Open Door principle was one all Allies should cherish, he said that he was proud that there were now 28 Allies around the Council table. He chided PermReps for sometimes hiding behind subordinate committees, reminding them that the NAC exists to take political decisions. He made the same point more poetically by saying that the PermReps were all "extraordinary," but sometimes he wished they were more "plenipotentiary." He was particularly strong in arguing for the need to make speedy decisions when they would impact Alliance soldiers or civilians in the field, commenting that he holds the military in the "highest esteem." He said that Allies should never forget that the NAC is a high level political body and that NAC visits, therefore, send an important political signal. He closed by thanking his wife for all her support. (Note: Although De Hoop Scheffer's tenure as Secretary General does not end until the end of July, he will be traveling on farewell visits during the rest of the month and will not attend another meeting of the North Atlantic Council.)
HEFFERN